

m.l.j.

Megiddo Message

DEVOTED TO THE CAUSE OF CHRIST

The Light That Gives Life

COMPLACENCY OR VIGILANCE

LEST WE FORGET

TAKE TIME TO WORK

MEDITATIONS ON THE WORD

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

THE CORNER STONE

Megiddo Message

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Kenneth E. Flowerday, Editor

A religious magazine, devoted to the cause of Christ and published for the dissemination of Bible truth alone. The MEGIDDO MESSAGE will

- Strengthen your faith in the Bible
- Answer perplexing religious questions
- Give you courage for these uncertain times
- Help you live above the world's moral corruption
- Reveal to you how to develop a character acceptable to God
- Bring peace and stability to your life
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I was so glad to get your most welcome letter. It was a great help in a dry land.

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We should be thankful for them and use them all to His glory.

Kinards, S. C.

Mrs. E. C.

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Dear Friends,

I love to tell others of the MEGIDDO MESSAGE and send my copies to them. It has no match to deal with those who are in the deep darkness. I am so thankful for the blessed good news and hope there is an end soon to the wickedness of this world. I find your MESSAGE and Bible School Notes so comforting in these days of so much anxiety.

Vancouver, B. C. Can.

E. G.

Gossip vs. Good News

Dear Sister,

Have just finished studying our extra good lesson on II Cor. 13: 5 in a recent MESSAGE. I never really understood it before, how that we have to actually prove, our own selves by comparing our deportment, to the demands of the Word.

One thing I have learned, that the harder the victory is to win, the more blessed it is to have won it. It takes all the courage that we possess sometimes and more than we possess many times. So all we can do is to keep trying until we conquer ourselves.

If we're tempted
To spread gossip
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Change the topic!
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For new life
In Coming Days.

Potsdam, N. Y.

Mrs. O. B. W.

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Dear Sister:

Any discussion of life's long-range plans and purposes carries with it a kind of hollow sound in these uncertain times. We cannot do anything about changing the world, but we can change our lives. By using our individual talents to spiritual advantage we can become new creatures in God's sight. There is soul-satisfaction in gaining spiritual victories for they bring a bountiful harvest in heavenly things. We have to look inward for these victories.

Elgin, Oregon

Mrs. J. G.

The Light That Gives Life

THE LORD is my light and my salvation" exclaimed the Psalmist. He was exulting over the wonderful light of the knowledge of God, His divine precepts that have lighted the path of the children of God throughout salvation's day. Its penetrating beams illuminate our darkened minds and cause us to understand God's glorious plan. It is the same light which He established in the very beginning and to which He referred in Genesis, "And God said, Let there be light: and there was light" (Gen. 1: 3). The Lord commanded there should be light, but not literal light; that had previously existed for untold ages. Here is something of greater significance: God was making known His plan of the ages, for mankind's highest benefit. The light of divine knowledge was to shine into the world. "And God saw the light, that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness" (v. 4). "And God made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day,"—two wonderful lights, but they had no reference to the literal sun and moon—"and the lesser light to rule the night" (v. 16). God made two great lights; physical light had sustained physical life for uncounted generations. Archeological findings with the aid of radio carbon dating, confirm this.

The Scripture writers made much use of allegory, symbolism and figurative speech. Especially so are these first chapters of Genesis.

Light, Figuratively Speaking

We read of a time, in II Samuel 21, when David went with his men to battle against the Philistines and came very near getting killed. In verse 17 we read, "Then the men of David sware unto him, saying, Thou shalt go no more out with us to battle, that thou quench not the light of Israel." He was the light, the leader, the secular and religious head of the nation. Whoever had the knowledge of God, as we shall learn in the investigation of this subject was and is said to be the light. The Truth, the Word of God, is the light, and whoever is proclaiming the Truth is called the light; so David was the existing light of Israel, one who was proclaiming the Truth to them.

In the prophecy concerning the rending and division of the kingdom of Israel after the death of Solomon, a typical use of figurative speech is exemplified. After foreshowing that ten tribes should fall to Jeroboam, leaving two, it is stated of Solomon: "And unto his son will I give one tribe, that David my servant may have a light alway before me in Jerusalem, the city which I have chosen me to put my name there" (I Kings 11: 36).

It was God's purpose to always have a light shining in Jerusalem. He had no reference to a literal light, but He left one tribe that David might have a light, or a representative, in Jerusalem, the city which He had chosen.

From Kings we go to the prophet Job. In chapter 22 he counsels us to become acquainted with the Almighty through His Word, that we may have peace and good and lasting treasures. To do this, it is necessary to first receive His Word, and lay it up in our hearts; then we shall be built up and shall put iniquity far away. Further, the Prophet informs us of the results and employs the figur-

ative term of light, coinciding with other of the Scripture writers' usage of the same. Job states: "For then shalt thou have thy delight in the Almighty, and shalt lift up thy face unto God. Thou shalt make thy prayer unto him, and he shall hear thee, and thou shalt pay thy vows. Thou shalt also decree a thing, and it shall be established unto thee: and the light shall shine upon thy ways" (vs. 26—28). This figurative or symbolic light will shine upon our pathway lighting us to that glorious coming day.

The Psalmist instructs us concerning this spiritual light: "How excellent is thy lovingkindness, O God! Therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of thy wings. They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of thy house; and thou shalt make them drink of the river of thy pleasures. For with thee is the fountain of life: in thy light shall we see light" (Ps. 36: 7—9). We shall see more and more of this wonderful light of truth as we proceed in the Christian life, and in the future age; our light shall keep increasing as we continue to grow in the knowledge of God. It will be eternal expansion.

We read in the 97th Psalm: "Ye that love the Lord, hate evil" (vs. 10, 11). If we love the Lord we must hate evil ways. The light is not dwelling in us unless we hate every form of evil and love only that which is good. Thus we are informed in the next verse: "Light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart." The darkness will disappear. This light will be sown more and more as the light shines upon our pathway if we are righteous, because He says further, "Rejoice in the Lord, ye righteous; and give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness."

From the 97th Psalm we refer to Psalm 119: 105: "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path." The author becomes more specific as to what this figurative light is. This Word of God is the light, and we are becoming the light as that Word is dwelling in and actuating us. "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path." Further, he restates the fact: "The entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple" (v. 130). That is what the great God meant in Genesis 1, when He said, "Let there be light," let this Word enlighten our minds. As Paul said, "The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints" (Eph. 1: 18). We neither know nor comprehend the riches of the glory of this wonderful inheritance, until the eyes of our understanding are fully enlightened. The entrance of His Word gives light; this is the light God is talking about. His Word, His wonderful truth, the gospel of salvation, is what gives us light and causes the darkness to disappear. We were all in darkness until this light of truth shone upon our pathway and enlightened our minds.

It is the Entrance of God's Word in our Minds that Separates the Darkness from the Light

We find an example of this in Proverbs 6: 23: "For the commandment is a lamp; and the law is light; and reproofs of instruction are the way of life." The law of

God is light, and the reproofs of instruction are the way of life. They divide the light from the darkness. That is the way we get light. It is through the reproofs of instruction that come to tell us where we are doing, speaking or thinking wrong. We need these words of reproof and warning; and as we receive them, the light shines more and more upon our pathway, and thus we become the children of light. Naturally we are children of darkness, walking in the darkness of the natural mind, governed by our natural thoughts and ways; but when we are governed by the words of truth, we become children of light. So these reproofs of instruction are the way of life, because the law is light. That is the light God instructs us about in the Bible. From the first of Genesis throughout the Book, the light God is talking about is usually this saving light of divine knowledge.

What darkness people are in! And they are contented to remain in darkness. They say that Genesis teaches that God had the grass growing before the light shone. But they do not know what the grass is. If we consult Isaiah 40 we find that the people are called grass. They are called grass because they are so short-lived and perishable. The people are called the grass, and that is the grass He was talking about in Genesis 1, that was growing on earth before God's saving knowledge was supplied.

The Light and Darkness Contrasted

We read in Prov. 13:9: "The light of the righteous rejoiceth: but the lamp of the wicked shall be put out." Their light shall all be put out. They think that they have much light now, these so-called wise men of the world, but they are ignorant of God's knowledge. They ridicule the Bible and are trying to get people to refuse to believe its teachings. Their light shall be put out: but "the light of the righteous rejoiceth." "Whoso despiseth the word [the true light] shall be destroyed: but he that feareth the commandment shall be rewarded; the law of the wise is a fountain of life, to depart from the snares of death" (vs. 13, 14). If we want to escape the snares of eternal death, we must listen to this law of the wise. It will give a crown of life to everyone that hears it.

Next we shall consult with the prophet Isaiah who pronounces woe upon them who obscure this figurative light: "Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness." That is the trouble. They call good evil and evil, good. They put darkness for light; they are spreading darkness instead of dispensing the glorious light of God's Word. "Woe unto them," it is declared. We do not want to put darkness for light nor light for darkness, but we need to listen to the truth, the light of God, not the fables and traditions of men. That is the darkness He is talking about, and the light is the truth.

We read in Isa. 8:20: "To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them." This is a strong statement: if any one is speaking contrary to this Word, there is no light of God in them.

Darkness the Natural Heritage of All

There is a thought in Isaiah 42, which we need to impress upon our minds, "I the Lord have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles; to open the blind eyes, to bring

out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison house" (v. 6). We are all naturally in the prison house of darkness; and this light of truth has to come to open the eyes of our understanding, and bring us out of this prison house into the wonderful, glorious light of God's saving truth.

Jesus taught of the same mind-blindness in Matt. 13:15. They are blind to the light of these wonderful truths. They have closed their eyes. You may read the evidence to them, but they will close their eyes to it. They are not willing to hear; they are not willing to receive the light.

People naturally like to walk in their own light, do as they please, think as they please and believe as they please; but we read: "Behold, all ye that kindle a fire, that compass yourselves about with sparks: walk in the light of your fire, and in the sparks that ye have kindled" (Isa. 50:11). The penalty for preferring darkness is plain. "This shall ye have of mine hand ye shall lie down in sorrow." If we walk in the light of the sparks of our own fire, in that day, the Almighty will cause us to lie down in sorrow. Death and destruction will be our portion instead of glory and immortality in the wonderful kingdom of God. We have our choice: We can choose the better way or we can choose the wrong way. He leaves us free moral agents.

We Must be Light Bearers

Now, having proved what the light is in contrast to darkness, let us proceed to show that those in whom God's knowledge is dwelling are also called the light. Jesus said to His apostles, "Ye are the light of the world" (Matt. 5:14). The Truth, the Word, is the light, and it dwelt in them. Hence, they were light. They were proclaiming it; and so God's people will be doing when Christ comes. That is why it says in Genesis 1:16, "And God made two great lights." He made a great light and a lesser light. When Christ comes and enlightens the world, and the knowledge of God fills the earth as the waters that cover the mighty deep, "the sun of Righteousness," the great light shall arise. Until then, this Word, the lesser light, is as Peter tells us, a light "shining in a dark place." There is dense darkness all around us. As we read in Isa. 60:2, "Behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people." He was not talking about literal darkness. If we walk in spiritual darkness we are the children of darkness, and are apt to be sleepy or even asleep. There is stern warning to which we must give earnest heed in Romans 13. It is high time to awake out of sleep, to wake up and see, be wide awake in spiritual things. It is high time. Why? Because "the night is far spent" (v. 12). He is not talking about a literal night, but this night of darkness the world is in when only this lesser light is shining. "The night is far spent, the day is at hand, let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light." There is that glorious armor of light! Cast aside the fables and traditions to which the world are turned, and walk as children of light, keeping God's holy commandments, walking in the footsteps of Jesus, putting away all wrath and anger, all malice and evil speaking. Walk as children of light so as to be worthy to be identified with that Day soon to break forth. The first thing we know, that glorious Day will dawn, and the Sun of righteousness will arise.

Jesus said, talking to His disciples: "Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid."

They were the light of the world because the Word was in them and they were proclaiming the Truth, the words of eternal life. And then He continues in Matt. 5, "Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven" (vs. 14—16).

Here is a command of Jesus necessary for us to heed: let our light so shine before men that they may see our good works. That is, be watching continually that we are not doing evil, or speaking evil, or abetting evil, or showing a bad example, but let the light of God shine in our lives.

That is the light that was good, the true light. Let your light shine by works of righteousness, not reviling others, not getting angry. To become angry or impatient, manifests darkness rather than light. "Cease from anger and forsake wrath," is the command of this Word of God to which we must take heed (Ps. 37:8). If we are not ceasing from anger and forsaking wrath, the light of truth is not dwelling in us. Do not cover your light up, but be strictly honest in every transaction; do to others as you would want to be done by.

If you make a promise, go and fulfill it unless you can lawfully get released from it. Be honest in every dealing. If some one gets angry and reviles us, the commandment is, "revile not again." Do not return evil for evil, but return good for evil; that is the way to let our light shine. This light of truth dwelling within us causes us to work works of righteousness which will be acceptable to God. "Let your light"—do not forget those words of Jesus, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." Some one will remember these works in that coming Day. Do not consider what man may say, consider only what God says, and comply with all of His commandments.

Paul also warns us of a responsibility of light bearers: "Do all things without murmurings and disputings: that ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world" (Phil. 2: 14, 15). Light bearers are never murmurers, but cheerful, rejoicing, examples of their Source of light.

We refer to II Cor. 4:1, where we find further example of the strength of light bearers: "Therefore seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not: but have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth commanding ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God." To not handle the Word of God deceitfully is to not teach contrary to His glorious principles of truth, to not deceive people and cause them to think that they can gain the prize without obedience to every commandment of God. "But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost." If this glorious light of truth is hidden to you, if you do not seek for and gain knowledge of it, and obey it, you are lost: "In whom the god of this world"—the things of this world—"hath blinded the minds of them which believe not." That is the trouble. We are blinded by the things of this world, anything that keeps us from believing and serving God. The god of this world, the things that rule them who are of this world, have blinded

them, "Lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them." What is the light? This glorious gospel of Christ. That is the light. The command was: "Let there be light," let this divine knowledge shine abroad. We are sending it abroad now to every one we can; to every name we can get, we are sending some of the words of truth, the light. "For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness,"—away back in Genesis He commanded the light to shine out of darkness. "For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God" (vs. 1—4, 6). God commanded the light to shine out of darkness, and hath shined in our hearts by giving the light of the knowledge of God to enlighten our darkened minds, so we can, by keeping His holy commandments, walk as children of light—and thus be light bearers.

The Light of the Grand Future Age

In Isaiah 9 the Prophet proceeds to tell us about the great light that is going to arise. We read in v. 2: "The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined." We are all dwelling in the land of the shadow of death! Death is hovering over all of us as our mortal heritage; the only thing that will ever save us is to walk in this light, then we may live in that grand future age.

A great light therefore has shone upon all who will receive it. But the future light will be immeasurably greater.

The prophet Malachi wrote about the light in the grand future age. "But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings [beams]; and ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall" (4: 2). That is the great light—even the Sun of righteousness. He shall arise to dispel all darkness. When Christ comes the second time to establish His heavenly kingdom and the knowledge of God fills the earth, then all the darkness shall disappear, that is, all shall know the Lord "from the least even unto the greatest." When the kingdom is fully established, they shall all know the Lord "from the least to the greatest." The glorious light of truth will then shine over the entire world.

No false doctrine can be taught; no fables of men broadcast. Then no false teachers will be allowed to live in the world, but truth will be proclaimed in every place by every individual. That blessed condition will prevail when the Sun of righteousness has fully arisen; that is the great light of Gen. 1: 16, the great luminary of divine authority which will dispel all darkness in the world, eliminate all the false traditions of men—a most wonderful light it will be!

The Light God Made in the Beginning

There is a timely thought in John's gospel about the light God is making. Chapter 1:1 reads: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." Prof. Goodspeed translates the last sentence of that text, "And the Word was divine." That is better than the Authorized Version. In place of "the Word was God," it reads "The Word was divine." The Word was not God. It was the product of God, and it was divine. In this as is referred to in Genesis 1. All through the ages

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Complacency or Vigilance

AS TRUE SOLDIERS of Israel, how much of these traits do we possess? If complacent, we are not aware of our actual condition.

Do we approve ourselves in a similar manner of complacency, realizing the proverb's assurance "a good man shall be satisfied from himself."

Do we find inward complacency in acting reasonably and virtuously?

Are we like the young man who asked Jesus, "What lack I yet" but whose complacent, self-righteous heart was certain there was no wrong within? He was too complacent, so self-satisfied, he could not make the sacrifice required to obtain the far greater and more lasting possessions than those which he literally owned. We may not have great possessions but we could be complacent in some way of our own which is not pleasing to the Almighty God.

Do we have the zeal and vigilance of a dauntless Paul, who counted all things but loss to gain the reward which the Christ-life brings? He let nothing subdue his courage and was persuaded that nothing in this whole world could separate him from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. He pressed toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

If we would win the prize of such a high calling, we too must press with all our mind, might and strength. There are obstacles and barriers to surmount in this life, even if we did not have a hope of a future. In fact, nothing of real worth comes to us without effort or from wishful thinking.

Perhaps we can derive a spiritual lesson from the little red hen:

Said the big white rooster, "Ah, old hemlock, things are tough; Seems that worms are getting scarcer, and I cannot get enough. What's become of all those fat ones is a mystery to me; There were thousands through the rainy spell but now where can they be?"

The little red hen who heard him, didn't grumble or complain, She had gone through lots of dry spells, she had lived through floods of rain;

So she flew upon the grindstone, and she gave her claws a whet, As she said: "I've never seen the time there were no worms to get." She picked a new and undug spot; the earth was hard and firm, The big white rooster jeered, "new ground! That's no place to get a worm."

The little red hen just spread her feet, she dug both fast and free, "I must go to get the worms" she said, "the worms won't come to me."

The rooster vainly spent his day, through habit, by the ways Where the fat worms passed in squads, back in the "good old rainy days."

When nightfall found him supperless, he growled in accents rough, "I'm hungry as a fowl can be. Conditions sure are tough." He turned then to the little hen and said, "It's worse with you, For you're not only hungry, but you must be tired, too. I rested while I watched for worms, so I feel fairly perk, But, how are you? Without worms too? And after all that work?"

The little red hen hopped to her perch and dropped her eyes to sleep, And murmured, in a drowsy tone, "young man, hear this and weep, I'm full of worms, and happy, for I've dined with luxury The worms are there, as always—but I had to dig like fury!"

We can vainly spend our day of salvation through habit, by the ways, as did the white rooster, but it requires

much zeal, effort and vigilance on our part if we would gain the prize of life eternal.

The little red hen was sure there was food, somewhere, but it required diligent, unrelenting work to get it. We must first be sure in our own mind that God is just, and is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him. He will reward all of our efforts in His service, but we must go to work and keep His precepts diligently.

It is easy to be complacent, because it is natural, but if we want life eternal, unceasing vigilance of our every thought, word, act and feeling, bringing it into subjection to divine law is the price we must pay to gain it.

MY PRAYER

To grow a little wiser day by day,
To school my mind and body to obey,
To keep my inner life both clean and strong,
To free my life from guile, my hands from wrong,
To shut the door on hate and scorn and pride,
To open them to love, the windows wide,
To meet with cheerful heart what comes to me,
To turn life's discords into harmony,
To share some weary worker's heavy load,
To point some straying comrade to the road,
To know that what I have is not my own,
To feel that I am never quite alone;
This would I pray from day to day,
For then I know my life would flow
In peace until it be God's will I go.

Diligence and Triumph

This word diligence comes from "diligo" meaning to "prefer or love." "And it shall come to pass, if ye shall hearken diligently unto (if ye shall prefer or love) my commandments which I command you this day, to love the Lord your God, and to serve him with all your heart and with all your soul, that I will give you the rain of your land in his due season, the first rain and the latter rain, that thou mayest gather in thy corn, and thy wine, and thine oil."

The promise is, "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it." White signifies purity, innocence, majesty, glory, eternity, wisdom, righteousness, holiness, prosperity, gladness. It is the symbol of triumph, of pardon, of acquittal. If we are to be triumphant Christians we will make ourselves worthy by diligently remembering His commandments to do them.

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some future time. The following verse shows why: "He must increase, but I must decrease." John's mission was closed, Jesus' mission was just beginning. If John's words "I must decrease," revealed his own position in Christ's future kingdom, it would create a very unhappy situation. He will be pretty small by the time he has decreased progressively for ten million ages!

Lest We Forget

OUR MIND turns back some 3500 years to a mighty spectacle. The hosts of Israel worn by a sojourn of forty years in the wilderness, have completed their weary circuit and are spread out upon the banks of the Jordan, awaiting the command to cross, at the spot where their fathers rebelled and turned back so many years before. Gone are the rebels now, fallen by the way according to the Word of the Lord: only three of the original company of adults remain;—Caleb and Joshua, the stern and capable officers who alone trusted in Jehovah to fulfill his promise, and Moses, the venerable leader, his eagle eye undimmed and his princely bearing untouched by the one hundred and twenty winters which had passed over his head. The grand old lawgiver has assembled all his host and is delivering his farewell address, since he may not pass over Jordan with them.

Chapter by chapter he recounts to his people—who as children in Egypt saw the hand of the Lord in its terrible power—the history of the Exodus, the triumphant departure from the land of bondage, the passage of the Red Sea, the giving of the Law, the trials of the march, the Providence which had fed them and given them water to drink, the mercy which had never forsaken the obedient and the judgments which had visited the rebellious with such awful swiftness and certainty, the power which had subdued mighty kings before them. And now the time for entrance had come; the promised land is before them. What would the future bring for them and for their children? Would the hand of the Lord be with them for good or for ill? The voice of Moses sounds a solemn warning of their responsibility: “For what nation is there so great, which hath God so nigh unto them, as the Lord our God is in all things that we call upon him for? And what nation is there so great, that hath statutes and judgments so righteous as all this law which I set before you this day? Only take heed to thyself, and keep thy soul diligently, lest thou forget the things which thine eyes have seen, and lest they depart from thine heart all the days of thy life.”

Not for Israel's sake were these things recorded and preserved for over three millenniums, but for us who walk by the Word alone,—lest we forget.

* * *

Let us at this time search our hearts and compare them with the Word. Let us beware lest we forget our former lowly estate, our filthy condition when wallowing in the mire of human thought before Truth lifted us and placed us upon the Rock. Let us beware lest we forget this great deliverance which has come to us through God's mercy alone, and desire to return to Egypt, for even a moment. We are almost at Jordan's banks now, and a return to Egypt, for ever so brief a visit, requires a long and wearisome return journey, and we may find, if we do fight our way back, that the hosts of the Lord have passed over and the waters have returned, that we may not cross.

Let us look to ourselves lest we forget our present imperfections, the aching void which exists between what we are and what we ought to be; lest we seek within ourselves the standard of right and wrong, instead of seeking only to the law; lest we be lulled to sleep by the ser-



pent who whispers in our ear, “Time enough yet.”

Let us guard ourselves jealously, lest we forget our high calling; lest we lower our self-respect to defile the temple of the Living God, to compromise the glorious cause of truth, to stain the silver armor with unprofitable follies, to allow the arm which should be hewing with the sword of the Spirit to become weak for want of exercise. Let us remember that fear and weakness are disastrous and can end only in defeat. Let us walk worthy of the vocation wherewith we are called, conducting ourselves with a dignity becoming our high ideals.

Let us ponder over the divine Record, lest we forget the noble examples, the heroic men who have gone before, the men who have laid the foundation upon which we are building, into the fruit of whose labors we have entered. Let us remember an Enoch, who had this testimony, that he pleased God: an Abraham, consecrating his all, even to his beloved son, to his Maker: a Joseph and a Daniel, two men with the rare faculty of being able to stand prosperity, and no less stedfast in the prison cell. “One may live a good life,” said Marcus Aurelius, “even in a palace”; and, while not many mighty are called, the example of these brave men proves to us that God's law is a perfect and thorough furnisher under all circumstances.

Let us ever remember the perfect example, the Lord Jesus Christ, created like unto His brethren, tempted in all points as we are, yet without sin. Let us, as we consider the two sides of the life of the apostle Peter, seek to emulate the noble and spontaneous affection which he displayed for his Master, his generosity, his fervent zeal

and instant action; and at the same time fear and tremble lest we, like him, become over-confident and fall into transgression through a release of the tension or the weakness of the flesh.

Let us not forget the life of the greatest apostle, Saul of Tarsus, as recorded in that matchless epic of heroism, the Acts of the Apostles. How the best characteristics of the so-called great of this world pale beside the deeds of this dauntless veteran of uncounted battles for truth and right. We have not his ability, so our works may not shine so brightly on history's page as do his, but we can so live that we may be associated with him throughout eternity.

Let us daily thank God for the life of the faithful and

wise servant of this day, the one who made it possible for us to profit by the words and example of the patriarchs and prophets of other days. His life we can view at close range, his faith and his works we know; let us strive to reach the same standard.

Let us beware lest we forget our Lord's warning to doubting Thomas, lest we close our eyes to the fulfillment of God's Word in these latter days, lest we, after once breaking the fetters of sin, return thereto and so become castaways. We know that Israel forgot the entreaties of Moses and the law given in the thunders of Sinai. But we, the servants of God in the last hours of probation, face to face with the consummation of all things, *must not forget*.

Take Time to Work--It is the Price of Success

MY FATHER worketh hitherto and I work" said Jesus. Can we be followers of the Lamb by doing anything less? Whatever a person undertakes in this world, a certain amount of work is a prime requisite for success. But, unfortunately, this idea has been lost among a large portion of our youth today. Work is considered to be something to avoid wherever possible; something degrading, to be despised; and by others, a necessary evil. Nevertheless, the command of Paul is as true today as when it was spoken to the Thessalonians that "if any would not work, neither should he eat."

At first thought, we might think, What does God have to do? His being all-powerful, nothing could be "work" to Him. But was it not work to have made "Heaven, with all their host, the earth, and all things that are therein, the seas, and all that is therein"? And besides this, God is still at work, for the universe is constantly being expanded. Nor will God ever cease working, for He is "from everlasting to everlasting." Time will never run out for God. But it will for us. We must work while it is day, "for the night cometh when no man can work." As the churches were a care to Paul, might not God's exercise of loving care over His countless family in heaven and earth entail planning, oversight and responsibility immeasurably beyond our finite comprehension?

What about Jesus? While He learned physical work as a youth in the carpenter shop at Nazareth, He was undoubtedly preparing Himself for His far greater work. Before He could enter the ministry, He had to learn obedience to His Heavenly Father, being tempted in all things, yet He did not yield. Though His ministry was of short duration, He crowded a lifetime of work into it. His teachings were so numerous, so all-embracing and so different from anything the world had ever known that they were despised and rejected by the majority of His countrymen.

Jesus not only did a great work Himself by doing always those things that pleased His Father, but He left His followers of all future ages with the greatest work of any known to the world—that of being an "overcomer." To attain unto the standard He left requires one's lifetime, for the command is "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect."

Jesus applied the teachings of His Father first to Himself. He never asked anyone to do that which could not be done nor that which He had not willingly done Himself. "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me and to finish his work," He told the unbelieving Jews. In His

memorable prayer in the garden, He testified, "I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do." His will and His Father's will had become one. He had been tried and proved. He was willing to suffer death at the hands of the mob rather than to deny His future Kingship. If we would reign with Him, we must also suffer with Him and if we deny Him, He will also deny us.

We, of this day and age have no less work to do, for the "old man" is just as much present today as it was nineteen hundred years ago and the call of the world is as strong or stronger than it was then. The world held enough attraction to draw away Demas who had been a faithful worker in Paul's day. And we of the present time have seen those whom we thought were sure winners in the race fall by the wayside, having loved this present world.

Physical work is not to be despised, for our Lord was himself a carpenter, Paul a tent maker, several of the apostles were fishermen, Ruth gleaned in the fields, David tended the sheep while he wrote the Psalms, the prophet Amos was a herdsman and many other familiar names could be mentioned of those who did common laborer's tasks. Paul also advised that work was a good thing, when he commanded the brethren to work with their own hands that they might lack nothing. And so it is with our salvation. Without "work" that greatest of boons can never be obtained. "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling" enjoined Paul. However, this work is not a careful, eight-hours-a-day, five-days-a-week job, but a full-time job. It requires constant painstaking work with our whole heart, soul, mind and strength. And this work is sometimes harder than physical work—but for inestimable reward.

Paul said that his light afflictions worked for him. Do ours? Are we patient in tribulation? Paul was. Do we glory in the cross of self-denial? The Apostle did. Do we rejoice always? We should. Jesus, when facing the greatest trial of His life asked His disciples to be of good cheer.

Do we abhor evil? Or do we make excuses for it? We can make no compromise with evil. Phillips translates Romans 12: 21: "Do not allow yourselves to be overpowered with evil. Take the offensive. Overpower evil with good!" That is work, but of the most profitable sort.

One of our elder world-statesmen once said "Work is the cure for all ills." This is just as true of spiritual ills as it is of physical, national or economic ills. Just as physical work overcomes periods of depression of the

mind, so will meditation and reading overcome thoughts of doubts and despair. If we are inclined to think our lot is hard, we should read of the hardships Paul and the other apostles suffered for the sake of the gospel and our little trials will seem like blessings by comparison.

"Take time to work—it is the price of success." Yes, all work takes time. Time is an important element in our working for eternal life. Our time is limited. It cannot possibly last beyond our natural lifetime. Knowing this, "it is high time to wake out of sleep; for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed." How we use this time allotted us and the amount of work we accomplish will determine whether we fail or succeed, for in our race for eternal life as in any other undertaking, work is the price of success.

Sons of Battle

Let us have peace, and Thy blessing,
Lord of the Wind and the Rain,
When we shall cease from oppressing,
From all injustice refrain;
When we hate falsehood and spurn it;
When we are men among men.
Let us have peace when we earn it—
Never an hour till then.

Let us have rest in Thy garden,
Lord of the Rock and the Green,
When there is nothing to pardon,
When we are whitened and clean.
Purge us from skulking and treason,
Help us to put them away.
We shall have rest in Thy season;
Till then the heat of the fray.

Let us have peace in Thy pleasure,
Lord of the Cloud and the Sun;
Grant to us eons of leisure
When the long battle is done.
Now we have only begun it;
Stead us!—we ask nothing more.
Peace—rest—but not till we've won it—
Never an hour before.



(Continued from page 5)

The Light That Gives Life

the beginning was the Word, and this is the same beginning from the time Adam entered God's service, God's servants had light, but they did not have the full light, the completed written Word, as we have it written out and recorded for our learning. When Jesus had finished His message and placed the Amen to the book of Revelation, that left the full light of God's truth. God sent angels many times as recorded in the Old Testament. The patriarchs and prophets had the Word brought to them, but the full glorious light was not recorded for their learning. The light was perfect only when completed by Jesus. John wrote: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was divine."

We read in v. 5: "And the light shineth in darkness;

and the darkness comprehended it not." This glorious light of truth is shining in the darkness, and the darkness does not comprehend it; that is, people are governed by error and fables, and are not willing to accept or believe the truth. Just as it is today, the light—this Word of truth—is shining in a dark place because the world will not accept it. They prefer to believe the fables and traditions of men. They will not turn to the Word of God and learn and believe what He says, hence spiritual darkness prevails.

Then we read, "There was a man sent from God whose name was John." Now here is another beginning, and in this beginning there was a man sent from God whose name was John. "The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light." He came to bear witness of the Light, this Light of Truth, to Jesus who proclaimed this wonderful light, and in whom was no darkness. He never proclaimed any false doctrines; He bore witness to the light (vs. 6—9). That was the true light, the Word of God, and he says it lighteneth every man that cometh into the world.

Well, we look out upon the world and the great majority of mankind are in darkness. But what world does He enlighten? Seeing there is more than one world spoken of in the Bible, we ask, the members of what world did He enlighten? We cite Heb. 2:5 again, "The world to come, whereof we speak." He enlightens every one whom He knows will form a part of the world to come. Every believer will be enlightened by this truth. The eyes of their understanding will be enlightened and they will become children of light, no longer children of darkness. He lightens every one of the world to come. It is qualified, and we must accept God's qualifying terms. We know that not every one of this "present evil world" is enlightened. Christ came to deliver us from this present evil world, and we know that not every one of this present evil world is enlightened. But here is the "world to come" of which every faithful one will be enlightened and form a part. "That was the true light." This Word of God is the true light. The Psalmist declares: "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path," and that is the true light which God is making.

And now we will read in Luke 2. These words were spoken at the time of the birth of Christ by the devout Simeon, who was a just man and waited for "the consolation of Israel." Simeon took Jesus and said, "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word: for mine eyes have seen thy salvation, which thou hast prepared before the face of all people; *a light to lighten the Gentiles*, and the glory of thy people Israel" (vs. 29—32). Christ became the light because the truth dwelt in Him richly. In verses 14—17 of Matt. 4 we have our attention called to the words as quoted from Isaiah the prophet: "The land of Zabulon, and the land of Nephthalim, by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles; the people which sat in darkness saw great light; and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death light is sprung up." He is coming to unfold the true light of truth, the Word of God. "From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." He said, this wonderful kingdom is coming. He preached these wonderful truths.

We, upon whose pathway this light of truth has shone, what children of light we should be! and how meek and humble before God, that we may be worthy of His mercy in that coming Day.

Meditations

On the Word

"The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?" (Jeremiah 17: 9).

"Know thyself," was a maxim of the ancient Greeks. "The proper study of mankind is man," sang a more modern poet; and, in spite of the fact that advanced psychology has done a monumental work in studying and classifying the various types of human thought and behavior, it is confessed that to his fellow creatures *homo sapiens* is still Man, the Unknown. Each school of thought approaches the subject with a theory to be confirmed, and usually it manages to find confirmation, for the labyrinth of human nature is far more devious and complicated and contradictory than our forebears ever dreamed.

The Fundamentalist theologian finds evidence of a being in God's mental and physical image reduced to a state of total depravity through no fault of his own as a result of a historic Fall. The Modernist concludes that men are gods, the sole embodiment of good, working out their destiny independently of a higher Power. Another group is equally certain that man is a meaningless jumble of atoms, the result of a fortuitous combination of circumstances, a scrap of driftwood at the mercy of forces beyond his control, with little or no responsibility for his actions.

Among so many contradictory philosophies, is it at all possible to arrive at the truth? The answer is emphatically Yes. It has been done. To our Great Example the human heart was an open book. ". . . he knew all men, and needed not that any should testify of man: for he knew what was in man" (John 2: 25). His conclusions are stated in Mark 7: 21—23: "For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: all these evil things come from within, and defile the man." If this is not a state of desperate wickedness, what is it?

Paul knew himself, as he wrote in Romans 7: 18, "For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing." Not that there is not a better side to human nature, but nothing which God calls permanently or thoroughly good. There is good in the worst of us, but scraps of goodness will not save us.

Viewing ourselves (for this is ourselves as well as the other fellow) in this unflattering light, we might well ask, "Why am I thus?" The question is fair, but the answer is by no means simple. Certainly we as individuals are not to blame for our heredity. Nor could we consistently charge the Almighty with creating the thing which He condemns as "desperately wicked." The old idea of a Fall of Man is definitely excluded by the Scriptures themselves. What then? Frankly, there is much that is beyond the scope of our small minds. The inscrutability of the ways of God has been misused as a cloak to cover a vast amount of injustice and error; but there are chasms which must be bridged by Faith. There are times when we have no alternative but to say, "Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it

. . . Touching the Almighty, we cannot find him out: he is excellent in power and in judgment, and in plenty of justice" (Ps. 139: 6; Job 37: 23). God's way is the best way, God's way is the right way.

Could we improve upon the Plan of the Ages? The question hardly deserves an answer. It is certain that, could we have had our way, man would have begun at the top, equal to the angels; probation would have been eliminated, and there would have been neither glory to God nor virtue to man. No, it is better as it is.

"Of the origin of life we have no knowledge," said a very wise man of the world; and the same is true of the origin of man. What the first man was like, we do not know. The well of the past is deep and filled with mystery. We do not believe the Darwinian theory, that man was evolved from primeval matter by natural selection, for the Word is against it. "All flesh is not the same flesh." Nevertheless there must have been an evolution of a sort, within the limits of the species, from a very low beginning to the present status of the human race, a survival of the fittest, preparing the way for God's evolution, in which the morally fit will survive throughout eternity. If that was God's method of creation, then it is the best way.

On the long road of life, human nature has been molded by conditions and circumstances. Man's primal instincts were all necessary for his survival in a hostile world, and as such they were good in their time and place. Evil is not a thing, but a wrong function; it is the use of a natural and potentially useful impulse at the wrong time, in the wrong place, toward a wrong end, that constitutes an evil function. The trouble is, man's control of his basic instincts has not kept pace with his material civilization. As a result, we find a world boasting the highest degree of technological advancement, declining rapidly into anarchy and bestiality because men have not learned to tame and direct the forces which lie within.

"Who can know it?" Who can read with clear vision this dark, mysterious book of the human heart? One only. "I the Lord search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings" (Jer. 17: 10). Not only so, but He has revealed this knowledge to us through His inspired servants. The proper study of mankind is not man, but the Word of God, which will make us wiser than all the wise men of earth.

But when we have attained this knowledge, what then? What shall we, or what can we, do about it? If man were a powerless victim of his heredity, the Bible might as well never have been written. Fortunately, human nature can be altered. The men and women God wants are the ones who, seeing themselves as they are, are not discouraged but straightway set to work with determination to make themselves over. Not to eliminate their instincts, for that is impossible; but positively to redirect them into right channels and to right ends. Man is a being with an animal nature but spiritual possibilities, and success consists in his discovering and developing these possibilities. His freedom of intellect, the one thing which separates him from the brute creation, works both ways; it permits him to sink far below the level of the beast, and it also enables him to rise to the nature of angels. The choice is his.

One of God's successful men, the Prophet Ezekiel (ch. 18: 31), states the matter concisely and dramatically: "Cast away from you all your transgressions whereby ye have transgressed: and make you a new heart and a new spirit: for why will ye die, O house of Israel?"



Questions and Answers

I have a thought or two I would like to relay for your prayerful thinking. One is in the "The Kingdom of God" booklet, the 144,000 mentioned as the aristocracy. I concede they are the aristocracy, but I believe there are two distinct 144,000 classes or groups, the one of Rev. 7th chapter, and one of Rev. 14th chapter.

In Rev. 14:1, the number to stand with Jesus on Mt. Zion is mentioned as being 144,000. The idea, our friend expressed, that there are two groups, each of 144,000 mentioned in Revelation, is without foundation. The evidence adduced is by no means definite.

To many, the number of 144,000 seems small to cover all the people worthy of salvation from the time of Adam's probation till the second coming of Christ. In fact, such a thought seems unbelievable to the average religious person. However, there is much in the Bible to suggest that the number worthy of salvation at Jesus' coming will be small.

In Matt. 7:14 Jesus said: "Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, that leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it." Isaiah 1:9 reads: "Except the Lord of hosts had left unto us a very small remnant, we should have been as Sodom, and we should have been like unto Gomorrah." Jesus likened the situation at His second coming to the conditions prevailing in the days of Noah, and of the time when Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed. Noah and his family, only eight persons in all, were saved at the time of the Flood, and only Lot and his two daughters survived the holocaust that destroyed the cities of the plain.

Consider the infidelity and rebellion of the people of Israel and Judah during the reign of the kings. Furthermore, after Jesus' three years of intensive preaching, teaching and healing; after His death and miraculous resurrection to life eternal, there were, in compliance with His command to tarry in Jerusalem until they should be endued with power from on high, only the meager number of one hundred twenty who were sufficiently impressed to assemble and await the Day of Pentecost.

One of the prophecies for these last days—the one we have just mentioned—that the world should be in the condition it was in the days of Noah and Lot, does not presuppose a large number in the way of salvation at this time, but the opposite. Jesus was specific as to conditions that should prevail at His second coming. He queried: "Nevertheless, when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?" (Luke 18:8). These words describe a small unpopular movement, rather than a great number following in the way to life. The foregoing, plus the inescapable observation of the insincerity of the professors of religion today, make 144,000 triumphant overcomers of their sinful natures seem a feasible number.

The projected or seeming evidence concerning the second group of 144,000, is that Rev. 7:4—8, pertains to twelve thousand from each of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel. It seems very unlikely that they are the tribes of natural Israel. It is highly improbable that the number from each of the tribes could run as uniformly as twelve thousand from each.

More than one Israel is plainly taught in the Bible. Much that is said about Israel or the twelve tribes has no reference to the literal Israel. One of these instances is Rom.

2:28, 29, where Paul said: "For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: but he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God." This also explains Jesus' saying to the woman of Samaria, "salvation is of the Jews."

The general Epistle of James the servant of God is addressed to the "twelve tribes which are scattered abroad." However we do not need to believe that they were the twelve tribes of literal Israel. Speaking of the people to whom the Epistle of James was addressed a writer in *The New Commentary* makes this explanation of the twelve tribes: "The description of them in the address as 'the twelve tribes which are of the Dispersion,' is symbolical, meaning Christians which are exiles from their true homeland." (Read I Pet. 1:1; Heb. 13:14; Ps. 39:12). We are all strangers here. As Christians we have no part in this present evil world.

To class one group of 144,000 as spiritual Israelites, the other as natural Israelites is not justified in the Book. The idea that the "first 144,000 are raised temporal bodies, but freed from disease and death's dread, and that they have to learn to believe Christ and His teaching first before immortalization is also unscriptural. All the dead subject to a resurrection are raised to mortal life; they must be judged and proved worthy, by their creditable record before death, in order to be elevated to the plane of immortality (Matt. 25:19—21; 31—46).

Hebrews 11 speaks of the rewards awaiting God's righteous servants, making no difference between those who lived in the days of the Patriarchs, and those living at the time of writing. "And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise: God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect." Jesus' Parable of the "laborers" provides the same "penny" as reward for all workers, irrespective of what hour of the day of salvation they labored.

The second 144,000 are superior to the first. John the baptist is of the first 144,000, Christ says none greater was born of women, but he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he. He was not to be a part of the Bride (the second 144,000), but classed himself as a friend of the bridegroom.

John was a great man, he had accomplished a great work, a man of the character and caliber to be able to act as Christ's forerunner, to be below the least to enter the kingdom of God, seems unthinkable. He was no "reed shaken by the wind," he was "more than a prophet," yet the least in the kingdom of God when clothed with immortality, would be greater than he as an outstanding mortal man.

John's classing himself as the "friend of the bridegroom" does not indicate he will never be any part of the bride, the Lamb's wife. John said: "He that hath the bride is the bridegroom: but the friend of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice: this my joy therefore is fulfilled." He was referring to his own position in relation with Jesus' position right then, and not at

(Continued on page 6)

The Corner Stone

Oh, this world is filled with bustle,
And with selfishness and greed!
It is filled with restless people
Who are clinging to their creed;
You can read it in their faces—
They are dreaming of the day
When they'll come to fame and fortune
And each care is put away.

Truth has riches and great honor,
In her right hand length of days;
Oh, the depth of wisdom, knowledge,
God to mortal man portrays!
It is better far than rubies,
And her ways are pleasantness;
If we keep her and retain her
She a crown of life will bless.

And I think, as I behold them,
Though 'tis far away they roam,
They will never find contentment
Save in Truth, the corner stone.
But I see they'll ne'er accept it;
It is far too great a task
Not to mingle with the worldlings
But with Truth to ever grasp.

Let the world, all filled with bustle,
Go on with their selfish greed;
It will never, never move one,
Who has Truth now for his creed.
You can see by word and action,
As you pass along each day,
Who are bound to reach the city
Where all tears are wiped away.

The great peace that is the sweetest
Is not born of minted gold,
And the joy that lasts the longest
And that lingers when one's old
Is no dim and distant pleasure,
Nor no false uncertain tone,
But 'tis Truth, our greatest treasure,
Yes, the Truth, the corner stone.

Oh, the rock, the sure foundation,
Is not made of shifting sand;
But it comes from God Almighty,
Not from teachings of vain man.
It will solace in bereavement
And will cheer when in distress,
Comfort bring unto the weary,
To the perfect give sweet rest.

Take the world, but give me wisdom
Which prolongs the fleeting breath;
All its joys and all its comfort
Will be lasting beyond death;
Then, there'll be a brighter morrow
For the ones who've clung thereto.
And great pleasure beyond measure
Will be given to just the few.

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